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In memoriam





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*Peter Bruntley*

# In Memoriam.

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## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BAR

ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF

PETER BENTLEY, ESQUIRE,

COUNSELOR AT LAW.

AND FUNERAL ADDRESSES BY

REV. B. C. TAYLOR, D. D.,

AND OTHERS.

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PRINTED FOR THE HUDSON COUNTY BAR.

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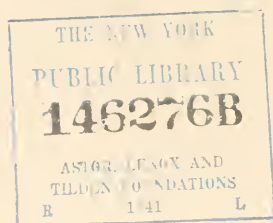
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## PROCEEDINGS OF THE HUDSON COUNTY BAR.

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PROCEEDINGS of the meeting of the Bar of Hudson County, held at the Court House, in Jersey City, on Tuesday, September 28th, 1875, to take suitable action upon the death of PETER BENTLEY, Esquire, late a member of their body.

The several courts of the county being in session:

JACOB WEART, Esquire, rose and said—That it became his painful duty as a Member of this Bar, to announce to the Court, that our late Brother, PETER BENTLEY, after a long and useful life, had fallen asleep in death, and that his labors among us as a valued and honorable practitioner at the bar of this Court have ceased.

Upon an occasion so full of sadness and sorrow, it becomes the bench and bar to lay aside the busy cares of the day, and to call to our view the solemn fact that before many days and years pass away, we too will be numbered among the dead, and the busy throngs that assemble in this court room will know us no more forever, and other men will fill our places upon the bench and at the forum.

MR. BENTLEY was our oldest practitioner, having been licensed in 1834. He practiced here some six years before the County of Hudson was created, and at the formation of the county in 1840, the bar of the county consisted of Samuel Cassedy, Jonathan D. Miller, Benjamin F. Van Cleve, Peter Bentley, Edwin R. V. Wright, and Thomas W. James, six in all, and after a period of only thirty-five years, hardly a hand's breadth upon the space of time, I believe that our bar now numbers over one hundred, and of the original six, Thomas W. James is the only survivor.

Our thoughts constantly turn back to this little band of six, performing all the legal requirements of the county when it first came into existence, among the sisterhood of counties in the State, the smallest and weakest of them all except Atlantic and Cape May, and now the largest in population of any county in the State.

PETER BENTLEY was one of the active men who laid the foundations, who helped to plan our municipal corporations, and draft our laws and charters, upon which the institutions of this great county have been reared; and when one so useful and honored among us is called to his final rest, it behooves the Court to lay aside its calendar and causes for a brief season, and out of respect to the memory of the dead, and in kind sympathy with his bereaved family, I move, your Honor, that the Courts do now adjourn.

JUDGE KNAPP remarked that the motion just made was a suitable mark of respect to one of the oldest and most favorably known members of the profession, whose recent decease was mourned by all; and that the Court would order an adjournment for the day.

Immediately upon the adjournment, a meeting of the Bench and Bar organized.

JUDGE KNAPP was called to the Chair, and ISAAC ROMAINE, Esq., was appointed Secretary.

The Chair appointed Messrs. JACOB WEART, STEPHEN B. RANSOM, and WASHINGTON B. WILLIAMS, a committee to draft suitable resolutions.

The committee after a brief recess reported the following

#### RESOLUTIONS:

WHEREAS it has pleased God to call from among us PETER BENTLEY, Esq., the oldest member of the bar of Hudson County, therefore,

*Resolved*, That, in submitting to this dispensation of Divine Providence, we recognize the loss of one of the foremost citizens of Hudson County, one who took a deep interest in the government and welfare of this people.

*Resolved*, That the Bench and Bar, have lost one who stood eminent in his professional life and character, being always devoted to the interests of his clients. He had a clear perception of the right, and a happy faculty of adjusting disputes and effecting settlements among men, and in the long course of his professional life he has left a spotless record.

*Resolved*, That in the cause of the Union he devoted his untiring and utmost exertions, ever forwarding the interest of the soldier and his family,

and standing by the Union cause until he went to Washington to witness the grand review of the army at the end of the war.

*Resolved*, That in every undertaking to advance the prosperity and commercial welfare of Hudson County he took a deep interest, and aided by the use of his capital and by his services as a director in the various boards of our local corporations.

*Resolved*, That we tender our deep sympathy to his afflicted family in this their hour of bereavement ; that a copy of these resolutions be presented to the Courts of Hudson County, and that they be sent to the family of the deceased, and published in the daily papers.

*Resolved*, That when this meeting adjourns we proceed in a body to attend his funeral.

MR. WEART moved the resolutions with the following remarks :

MR. CHAIRMAN—This bar is again summoned to lay aside for a brief season its busy cares and contemplate the most solemn of all the events of life.

In the providence of God there are two events in our lives over which we have no control ; these are, our birth and our death. Of the latter, it is the deepest of all mysteries, and by a divine hand so completely shut out from our vision, that we are permitted to carry on our plans of life, as though every other human being is mortal except ourselves. Yet we see dropping into their graves from day to day, the lovely form of the infant, just reflecting the bright image of its creator ; the youth, in all the gaiety and frivolity of early childhood ; the young man and maiden, just bursting into all the realities of early man and



womanhood, full of joy and pride, with all the hopes and prospects of the world before them; the man of more mature years, in the full strength and vigor of his manhood; and at last comes the aged man with his silver locks, the full measure of his life all rounded out, and gathered like a shock of corn when fully ripe for the sickle.

On the present occasion we are about to gather around the bier of our oldest lawyer, one who has filled out his three score years and ten, who has finished out his work on earth, and whose soul now dwells in the spirit land.

It is fitting on such an occasion that we should pause for a moment, look into the open grave, and contemplate that we shall soon stand before that great judge who has so recently summoned our departed friend before him.

In PETER BENTLEY I found my most early friend on coming to this county. I rented my first office from him, and he continued my office landlord for many years. And the bond of friendship between us was ever strong and most enduring. He always aided me in my early professional life in every way in his power, and we continued intimate friends until the hour of his death.

Licensed in February, 1834, he had been a practitioner at the bar for nearly forty-two years. He was a member of the bar of Bergen County before Hudson County was set off, and his was one of the leading minds that aided in building up all our institutions, both of a public and private nature. He was a director in our banks and

insurance companies ; one of the Vice Presidents and active promoters of the Provident Institute for Savings, with its millions of deposits, and the private institution in which our people glory the most, and he has been if not always, for many years the Attorney and Counsel for that institution.

As a lawyer he was possessed of great industry and filled up a full measure of usefulness in his day and generation, always relied upon by his clients with the most implicit faith ; and by his industry and frugality he amassed a large fortune. He has left to the rising generation a bright example, having learned the art of printing and followed it for a few years, which he threw aside for the profession of the law ; with his own hands earning the material aid which maintained him in his clerkship. Therefore we see the boy that stood at the case, standing before courts and juries, and with the fortune earned by his labor, he made the circuit of his own country and of Europe ; associating with the refined and enlightened people of both hemispheres. In what country and government except our own, has the poor boy such a chance in life, for promotion and distinction ?

MR. BENTLEY was no office seeker—the only political office that he ever held was that of Mayor of this city in 1843—yet he exercised a powerful political influence. He had the welfare of this city and county at heart. I served with him in the committee of twenty-eight, and on the sub-committee of legislation of that committee, and his labors

there were very arduous. He afterwards planned and carried through the act which raised the commission which adjusted our unpaid assessments, the results of which have been very beneficial to our city.

The last labor that he performed was a gratuitous one in behalf of this people, in an endeavor to restore this city to a sound and prosperous condition, and these closed the labors of his life. Failing health was upon him, and he sought quiet and repose in Europe and California, from the latter of which places he returned in June last, and I heard him say after his return that no land or country looked to him half as delightful as did the county of Hudson. He returned in time to breathe his last in his own home, surrounded by his kindred and friends, the place where the full vigor of his manhood had been spent. This bar will honor and revere his memory, and may his ashes rest in peace.

MR. W. B. WILLIAMS, seconded the resolutions, as follows :

Having spent several years in MR. BENTLEY'S office as a student, and having begun professional life there, I feel perhaps nearer to him and more bound by ties of esteem and gratitude than any one here, in the absence of his old friend and companion, Mr. Scudder. I esteem it a privi-

lege to second these resolutions, with a few reminiscences of him and of office life twenty-seven years ago.

Although I cannot assume as yet the part of a patriarch, yet the scenes which then surrounded a student in Jersey City were very different from now. MR. BENTLEY's office was at No. 3 Montgomery street, on the ground floor. Across the hall Matthias Ogden occupied the rear office, and I. W. Scudder, then in the prime of early manhood, the front. Furniture was not so stylish then. Green baize or serge, well spotted with ink, covered pine tables. An ancient chair, with a writing desk on one arm, was still in being a short time ago, which had served Mr. Samuel Cassedy, was given by him to MR. BENTLEY when he commenced practice, and descended to me as a station on which to con my Blackstone and draft with pains and earnest care my first *narr.* with common counts. Dust, books and papers were scattered in about equal proportions upon the tables, mantels and chairs. Though it was not so bad as Lord Coke's, when a law-library could be carried in a wheel barrow, yet it will be remembered that since then, over 30 volumes of N. J. Reports have been published, the whole set of N. Y. Court of Appeals, perhaps 120 volumes of N. Y. Supreme Court of different series, 25 of the U. S. Reports, and over 150 English. The lawyer then had the earlier editions of Story; but he knew not Parsons, Bishop, Wharton, Rawle, Dillon, and others who assist him now. The prosperous State of California, whose Reports of over 40 volumes are the

latest acquisition of our own Law Library, was then a territory with courts as yet unorganized, where alcaldes were still administering Spanish usages.

MR. BENTLEY, though never claiming to be deeply read, possessed a good working library, and took pleasure in keeping it up. He was familiar with where to find the needed information, and with a few practical suggestions and directions, urged students to work out their own difficulties. His advice was sound and practical. He had a quick and excellent perception of the right of a case, and of its reasonable probabilities. He was noted for bringing about settlements, and fought his clients' battles as cunningly and with as much tact, ingenuity and success in office conferences, as many others do before the Court.

I think his shrewd judgment of the probabilities of success was well shown in his adoption, with persistent energy and confidence, of the celebrated case of Mrs. Bell, involving the question of the right of the State to lands below high-water mark. After twelve or fourteen years of contest, in which he secured the aid of some of the ablest counsel in the State, and when it seemed likely that final success in the U. S. Supreme Court would justify his views, a satisfactory settlement was reached. The sale of the valuable rights in question to the Long Dock Company initiated the series of vast improvements which now line our shores for miles, and I believe that whatever may be said of the sure result, sooner or later, of the natural advantages of this shore, the persistent energy of MR. BENT-

LEY greatly aided in hastening the advent of these improvements.

My own friendly relations with him remained unchanged after my admission to the bar ; and I was glad and proud when I could in turn assist him, and when as his years advanced he would come and put questions to a younger mind fresh from the work-bench and the tools. Especially was I glad to receive at times his confidence, and to unite with him in his paternal anticipation of the usefulness and success of his only son, with whom we sympathize to-day, and to whom he so earnestly looked to inherit his honorably earned reputation and clientage, and to attend his gray hairs with honor to the grave.

He hated hypocrisy and cant, and injustice and oppression of all kinds.

He loved political honesty, and he loved freedom. A life long Democrat, he became a Free Soiler as soon as the slavery propaganda grasped at the control of the Federal Government, and of the public conscience.

And when the storm of civil war came on, and many bold hearts were dismayed, who was clearer in voice and judgment than he ? Who more unshrinking in his loyalty, and firmer in his faith, from the outburst at Sumter, through all the darkening and brightening days, down to the final hysteric joy and thankfulness of the spring of 1865 ?

Lately, he saw with pain the decay of honor in our federal and municipal service, and I regret to say that his

clear judgment did not foresee a speedy improvement. True, the old are more foreboding than the young. But it may well cause us to stop and think, when aged men with large experience of affairs and of tendencies, are tempted to augur ill, or to despair of the republic.

After he retired from legal business, his active mind was interested in the new discoveries and improvements of the age and of the country. He loved travel, and he visited Europe and the Great West with the zest of a younger man.

He lived the allotted space of life, and passed away respected by us all, an active and useful citizen, a wise counselor, a kind and exemplary husband and father, a faithful and zealous friend, and one whose career from small beginnings to an honored close, may well encourage the obscure and unaided youth of his own or other professions, to aim high, and to be not faint-hearted by the way.

#### REMARKS BY MR. C. H. WINFIELD.

MR. CHAIRMAN — Some of the gentlemen who have spoken, have referred to the frank, open-hearted character of our deceased friend. Those who knew him well will not wonder that he thus impressed himself upon those with whom he came in contact. After many years of intimate professional life, my judgment is, that for him

to have been otherwise than as thus described, was impossible. It was a part of his nature. Honest and high-minded, he looked with contempt upon trickery and meanness. Liberal in his political and religious views, he yielded to others the full right to differ from him. His life was a practical embodiment of the sentiment :

“ Concerning creeds, let fools and bigots fight,  
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.”

Honest, liberal, industrious and economical, the fruits of his toil are not so great as the good name he leaves to his posterity.

#### REMARKS BY MR. S. B. RANSOM.

MR. BENTLEY was in some respects a remarkable man. Commencing his career here when our county was in its infancy, he became identified with its growth, and in no small measure assisted in shaping its destiny. Injustice, oppression, fraud and corruption in municipal, state, or national affairs, found in him an uncompromising foe. He was originally a Democrat, and acted with that party ; but no party ties were strong enough to control his action in a direction which his conscience did not approve ; and when, in 1848, the Democratic party, at the dictation of the South, proclaimed its purpose to force Slavery



into all our Territories, his free spirit revolted, and uniting with similar spirits in the State, he took an active part in organizing the "Free Soil" party. It was at the Convention held in Trenton in the Summer of 1848, to organize that party, and nominate an electoral ticket, that I first became acquainted with him. He took a very active part in that movement, and, although the ticket then nominated, at the election in November following, received but about one hundred and forty votes in the State, the principles of that party which he then advocated, took deep root in the Nation, and he lived long enough to see their complete triumph, in the absolute overthrow of the hated institution of Slavery.

In the great struggle that led to this glorious consummation, the nation contained no truer patriot, or more staunch supporter than Mr. BENTLEY. His patriotism, it is true, was not of that noisy and boisterous kind which characterized many who acquired a reputation for intense loyalty to the government, and found their reward in profitable contracts, moieties, and commissions; but of that quiet, retiring kind that watched passing events with intense interest, and spared not his wealth, when needed, to fill up and maintain our armies in the field.

And after the war was over, he felt a deep interest, and took an active part in public affairs. He very clearly foresaw the ruin toward which the extravagance and recklessness of the nation were drifting us, and no one labored harder to check that extravagance and reckless-

ness than Mr. BENTLEY. In our own city affairs he took a very active part in all measures which were inaugurated to defeat the schemes set on foot by interested parties to swell our public expenditures, and increase our city debt.

In his private business he was remarkably successful. Commencing the practice of the law in this county, a poor young man, without influential connections, by his industry, energy, perseverance, and strict fidelity, he won the confidence of the community, and amassed a handsome fortune. His career in this respect is an example to the young men of our profession.

The same industry, energy, perseverance and fidelity that made our deceased brother successful will bring to the poorest young man of the profession a similar success.

He possessed one characteristic in particular which we all, at all times, would do well to follow—it was the habit of always living within his income. Speaking of this one evening at his own house, just before he sailed for Europe, the year before his death, he said that the wealth he possessed was the result of the plan he adopted in early life, of saving something out of every dollar he made, if it was but a sixpence.

In short, our departed friend, while he lived, in all the relations of life, acted well his part, and he has now gone to his reward. It is ours to imitate his virtues, and so live that when we shall be called upon to exchange worlds, it may justly be said of us, as it is now said of our departed brother, “Well done good and faithful servant.”

## CORRESPONDENCE.

JERSEY CITY, OCTOBER 30th, 1875.

BENJAMIN C. TAYLOR, D. D.

*Dear Doctor*—In discharge of the duty which we owe to the memory of the dead, the Bar of this County have thought fit to publish a memorial to the memory of our late and lamented brother, PETER BENTLEY, Esquire. As you took a prominent part at his obsequies, having preached the funeral sermon, you would confer a great favor if you could furnish us with a copy of your remarks to publish with the bar proceedings.

In making this request, permit me to say, not by way of flattery, for you have passed beyond that in your earthly career, but by way of justice, that you have greatly honored yourself, and the clergy which you represented on that occasion. Having passed the age of threescore years and ten, allotted to man, and having retired from the active duties of the pulpit, after having labored over fifty years in Christ's vineyard, you were called upon to perform the sad office of these funeral rites; all eyes were upon you as you arose, and, with bodily frame so weakened, that you required the support of a chair to sustain you, and a voice so tremulous as to awaken the sympathy of every hearer, and as you proceeded gaining strength by every effort, the fire and zeal of your youth were kindled anew: the great truths of religion, of life, and the grave, of our duties here, and the hopes and rewards of the future state, were all portrayed as brightly and as vividly as though you were just opening your work in the ministry, instead of having laid it aside, worn out in the service of the Good Master, awaiting now for that reward and crown which you believe is laid up for you in heaven, and which you have so often held up to the gaze of the erring and wayward sinner.

It pleased God to give you strength on this occasion equal to the hour, and carry you safely through; may we be permitted to have your words, so that we may often refer to them, and keep them fresh and vivid in our memories.

Hoping that you will be able to comply with our wishes, and wishing you every happiness and bodily comfort in your declining years.

I remain, with great respect,

Yours truly,

JACOB WEART, *Chairman*.

JERSEY CITY, NOVEMBER 10th, 1875.

HON. JACOB WEART, *Chairman*:

*Dear Sir*—Although my remarks at the funeral services of our esteemed friend, MR. BENTLEY, were unwritten, and therefore cannot be perfectly repeated by me, I, nevertheless in compliance with your request of 30th ult., herewith furnish you with as complete a draft of them as my memory will enable me to make.

The sadness of the occasion which called forth their utterance is indeed relieved by the pleasant and happy thoughts of the uprightness and geniality of the life of the departed, and it gives me great pleasure to see that his brethren of the Bar intend to perpetuate his memory in the manner indicated in your letter, and I cheerfully contribute what I can to that end.

Permit me to add my grateful acknowledgement of your kind expressions towards myself.

Yours, very truly,

BENJAMIN C. TAYLOR.

## FUNERAL SERVICES.

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THE funeral services were held at MR. BENTLEY'S house. They were attended by a large concourse, filling the ample rooms, and overflowing upon the piazzas, and out into the surrounding grounds. The representatives of the Bar and of the other learned professions, together with other persons of distinguished position and character, were present in such numbers that it seemed as though the city itself had by a spontaneous impulse come forth to pay its unbought tribute of respect to one who for a whole generation had been identified with all its best interests, and whose welfare had been largely benefited by his acknowledged sagacity and wisdom.

The religious services were conducted by the Rev. Mr. PUTNAM, of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, of which MR. BENTLEY was a parishioner, assisted by the Rev. Dr. TAYLOR, of the Reformed Church of Bergen, and the Rev. Dr. PARMLY, of the First Baptist Church of Jersey City.

After reading the "Opening Sentences," the Psalms, and the Lesson, in the Episcopal Service for the burial of the dead, at MR. PUTNAM'S request, Dr. PARMLY offered prayer. Prayer being ended, MR. PUTNAM spoke substantially as follows :

DEAR FRIENDS—We have been drawn here to discharge the last duties, the office of tender and affectionate respect which our hearts and the sentiments of our religion equally prompt us to pay to all that remains to us of one of ourselves, who during a long life held among us an honored place, and who has fallen at the mature age of three score and ten, amid expressions of universal regret and sorrow. This family which has long been a fountain of benevolence and kindly deeds, has lost its head. These children have lost the father whose affection and energy combined, brought out at once the good name and the ample inheritance which he has bequeathed them. The Bar of this county mourns a member who had long stood in their front rank. His circle of private friends miss from themselves one whose genial hospitality was unsurpassed. The deserving poor, and those who needed help in the struggle with the reverses and rough discipline of life, have lost a kind and judicious friend, and this whole community one whose presence was always required to make any public assemblage complete. I stand here as his Pastor to conduct these religious solemnities, which befit one who has left us so many claims upon our respect and personal regard. It does not, however, fall to my lot to pronounce his funeral sermon. This duty will be discharged by his venerable friend, the Rev. Dr. TAYLOR, whose presence with us to-day is a source of unmingled satisfaction to all, and this in pursuance of a special request made many years since.\* I have now great pleasure

in calling upon my esteemed and venerated brother to speak to us such words as God shall put into his heart for our edification and spiritual consolation.

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\*EDITOR'S NOTE.—Some thirty years ago, MR. BENTLEY lost a friend residing in Hoboken, and DR. TAYLOR was called upon to preach the funeral sermon. The deceased was a comparative stranger to DR. TAYLOR, but he conducted the service in such a manner as to greatly please MR. BENTLEY, and meeting DR. TAYLOR a short time afterwards, MR. BENTLEY complimented him on his funeral discourse, and made the request that if he should be living at the time of his decease, he desired him to preach his funeral sermon.

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#### ADDRESS OF REV. DR. TAYLOR.

No one of us can fully comprehend the import of that little word, Life. Existence, past, present and future, all big with responsibility. The past, with its joys and sorrows, toils and cares, and its responsibility never to be revoked. The present, instinct with activity and ever accumulating accountability. The future, all before us, all unknown, except that death, judgment and eternity await us, with Heaven or Hell for our home.

The realities of life and death are now comprehended by him, whose mortal remains are encoffined before us, and of him it is now written, "He was and is not, for God hath taken him."

My earliest acquaintance with MR. BENTLEY, was formed, when he was a student in the law office of the late SAMUEL CASSEDY, Esq., prosecuting his course of reading with diligence and care, until having obtained his

license, he became a practitioner at the bar, as an attorney-at-law, and subsequently as a counselor-at-law. Following his profession actively, and by his integrity and industry obtaining many friends, he was prospered in his course. He well understood the principles which were the basis of all good law, and comprehended the practical working thereof.

By diligent attention to, and indomitable perseverance in his vocation, he readily obtained a competency, which by favorable circumstances, subsequently secured to himself and family his beautiful home, so often the scene of delightful associations and enjoyments.

But it was especially as a citizen, that Mr. BENTLEY'S best qualities of mind and heart were prominently developed. In every public improvement within the county he was always active. In the early movements for the erection of the County of Hudson, he bore a prominent part.

We call him to mind, as standing beside us during the ceremony of laying the corner stone of our present Court House, devoutly attent to the prayer of consecration, followed by the felicitous address of the late Chief Justice HORNBLOWER. And again, when the building was completed, bearing a prominent part in the arrangements for its dedication, on the occasion of the opening of the House, for the holding of the first term of court therein.

We remember him, also, when the citizens of the State of New Jersey were moved to efforts for the enactment



of our present Common School Statute, vigorously prosecuting our local arrangements, to further the same, and in the State Convention, in that great cause, bearing a full proportion of its labor.

Nor can we be unmindful of his earnest work during the period of our late Civil War, in securing men to go forth to the conflict, and providing means for their comfort, as hand in hand with his recently departed companion and friend, the late Dr. JOHN M. CORNELISON, they stirred up their fellow-citizens to action, crowned with success.

Thus, also, in every good word and work for the welfare of his fellow-citizens in Jersey City, and in the County of Hudson, making to himself a name and reputation long to be honored.

The days of his vigor were followed a few years ago with bodily infirmities, which while away from home, and in quest of health, he bore with patience and submission to his Heavenly Father's will.

Nor can we forget the tender scene witnessed in his chamber of sickness, where, with his family by his bedside, we spake of the great realities of his approaching change, and his solemn attitude as we bowed at the "Throne of Grace," and sought the consolation which he needed; his calm composure, and his devout utterance of the hearty "Amen," at its close.

To-day, how changed the scene! at this solemn hour looking upon his lifeless remains of mortality. Oh! how

little do we, individually, comprehend the import of that other little word—Death.

Look there ! There is now a head—but it cannot think ; there are eyes—but they cannot see ; there are ears—but they cannot hear ; there is a mouth—but it cannot speak ; and hands—but they cannot handle ; and feet—but they cannot walk. And there is a heart, once beating high with life's pulsation, but now it has ceased to beat ! and soon these mortal remains will be committed “dust to dust,” “ashes to ashes,” to await the mandate of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life.

With his bereaved companion and children, our outgoing sympathies are heartfelt. For them our prayer ascends, in view of their recent and thrice repeated bereavements, and now the removal of husband and father, that God our Heavenly Father, may fulfil to them his promise, to be a Judge of the Widow, and the Father of the Fatherless.

To this large assembly, witnessing their sympathy with the bereaved, and their attestation to the worth of the departed one, we can only say, “Watch and Pray, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.”

But I cannot close without appeal to this large number of the Members of the Bar of New Jersey, present. Moving onward in the lines of duty, of your highly respected and most honorable profession, in the vindication of the right, and the defence of those who are wronged, and putting forth a mighty power for the maintenance

and well ordering of the County and State, and the sustaining of the principles and the practice of "that righteousness which exalteth the people," we ask you to remember, as you come around this coffin, to take the last look at the countenance of him, who was your brother and fellow-member, that, accustomed as you have been to standing at the seat of judgment with the witnesses before you, searching the truth, for the maintenance of law and equity, ere long, you, individually, must stand on trial before the "Bar of the Judge of the quick and the dead," who will meet out to you a righteous judgment, and an irrevocable adjudication to life or death eternal.

Though in the memory of the past, we remember when there was but one counselor-at-law in all the territory of the present County of Hudson, and now see so large a number, we call to mind those, who once were with you, but now are passed away forever.

Where are CASSEDY, MILLER, McCLELLAND, J. DUNN LITTELL and others from neighboring counties. The PENNINGTONS, JACKSON and CHETWOOD whose voices were so often heard in earnest pleadings at the Bar of this County? And where are Chief Justice HORNBLOWER and Chancellor ZABRISKIE, who so many years presided with dignity in our Courts, and where are NEVIUS and OGDEN, all of whom so happily adorned the Bench, and whose memories are still fragrant?

Oh! how to-day, from the eternal world, they, with our deceased friend, join in crying aloud to you, "Prepare to meet thy God."

## ADDRESS BY REV. DR. PARMLY.

After the appropriate remarks by my venerable friend and brother (Rev. Dr. TAYLOR), my words shall be few. Yet, standing in the presence of these symbols of mortality, and confronted by a monarch who exempts no subject from his powerful grasp, I would briefly act the part of a remembrancer.

Are we not, dear friends, by these scenes, solemnly reminded that "We all do fade as a leaf?" Twenty years since, when I first formed the acquaintance of this friend, he was among the most active and useful of our citizens, and seemingly, in the enjoyment of perfect health. Associated with him, and us, in those days, among other honored names, were those of Hon. A. O. ZABRISKIE, DUDLEY S. GREGORY, P. C. DUMMER, and Dr. J. M. CORNELISON, all in the prime of life and usefulness. Where are they to-day? Faded from our vision—gone to their rest. He has only left us to join that goodly company.

Another reminder just as clear is, that we are rapidly journeying in his and their steps, to the chambers of death. This coffin and shroud, and all the other habiliments of the grave, are unanswerable arguments.

"Whether we chafe or chide,  
On is Time's pace,  
Never his noiseless step  
Doth he retrace."

Willing or unwilling, this event, in thunder tones, confirms to each individual before me, the language of Revelation (Num. 27:13)—“Thou also shall be gathered to thy people.” And if these things are so, what is the plain course of duty for the living? Our divine, unerring teacher has furnished full answers to this inquiry. Listen to them: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest;” “Be ye also ready.”

Finally, to this company of mourners now afflicted with the sense of an irreparable loss, I would offer the consolations of divine grace.

“Sorrow not as those who have no hope.” You witnessed the sufferings of this dear friend in his latter days, and did what you could to relieve them. Now that he is gone, rejoice—rather than mourn—that he is at last freed from the pains of death, and rests in peace. And, by an unfaltering trust in Him who has said—“I am the resurrection and the life”—anticipate a glorious reunion in that world where “the inhabitant shall not say—I am sick,” and tears and sorrow and sighing shall be known no more.

To the tender mercies of our covenant-keeping God, I commend the bereaved widow, with these fatherless children, and weeping friends. Amen.

## ADDRESS BY HON. I. W. SCUDDER.

Men become important in the estimation of the public on account of the field of action in which they display their talents. A fortunate prominence of position, which attracts public attention, often-times gives fame and notoriety to men of moderate talents, while men of more ability and real merit do not receive a full appreciation on account of their more limited sphere of action. Mr. BENTLEY was an example of the influence of our popular government, which has brought forward so many men who have achieved marked success.

To be a successful man in any honorable occupation, in the midst of embarrassments, gives evidence of energy, talent and ability. Failure is the rule among men; success is the exception; and if we could have an accurate record of those men who have triumphed over difficulties, we would have a history of courage, endurance, and perseverance, which would make up the elements of a great character, and which, if displayed on a field of national importance, would ensure a permanent fame.

Mr. BENTLEY may be classed among the men of decided ability. Whatever he undertook, he succeeded in. He was born in the year 1805. He came into life after our government had ceased to be an experiment, at a period when our people were waking up to a consciousness of their power and importance. He was born on a farm at

the Village of Half Moon, in the County of Saratoga, in the State of New York, and he spent his active days within sight of the bay and waters over which Hendrick Hudson, the celebrated English navigator, in the employment of the Dutch East India Company, on the third of September, 1609, sailed in the Half Moon, in his explorations in the harbor of New York. His father was of English descent, and his mother had the Holland blood. The labors of the farm gave him vigor and endurance; and as at that period the great systems of Common Schools, which are now so general in our country, and which shed their light on all, were not in existence, his active and inquisitive mind obtained such cultivation as the uninformed District School-master in the winter season, afforded. His impulses, however, led him to take part in the more active affairs of life.

In 1825, when twenty years of age, without the aid of capital, and the sustaining power of influential friends, he came to Jersey City. Yates & McIntyre, who at that time owned many of the lottery grants of the country, by means of which Union College, of New York, the Society for the Establishment of Useful Manufactures, at Paterson, and many other institutions, were promoted, carried on the business of printing lottery tickets and schemes, at Jersey City.

With the impulse and courage which marks the successful character, he entered that establishment, and at that age acquired the art of printing, and was thus brought

within the sphere of the movements of that period. Here he formed an acquaintance with the members of that firm, who were then prominent men, and with some of their successors, he was on terms of friendship until they all passed away.

The profession of the law then, as now, was regarded as the way to honorable distinction and fortune.

Notwithstanding his limited means of early education, he determined to enter a higher position. After remaining five years with Yates & McIntyre, in the early part of 1830 he undertook the study of the law with SAMUEL CASSEDY. Mr. CASSEDY was at that time the prominent attorney in the old county of Bergen, which stretched from Rockland county, New York, to Kill Von Kull, and as railroads did not then afford their facilities for reaching every part of the State within a few hours, writs were issued in Powles Hook, and sent to the Sheriffs of Essex, Middlesex, Monmouth, and other counties; clients not being able to have personal intercourse with the attorneys in what were then regarded as remote districts.

Not being an idle or mere formal student, Mr. BENTLEY took charge of many of the details of office business. His Preceptor gave him the business of the Justices' Courts. Affairs in that Court were more important than now. The jurisdiction of that tribunal, though limited, was regarded as of more importance, than at present. Personal property at that time was confined chiefly to mortgages, shares in banks and insurance companies, and the struggles in



the Justices' Courts were often participated in by lawyers of the first talent in the State. That was the training ground for the young professional aspirant; and six or twelve freeholders were often assembled before the magistrate as jurors, to settle controversies, which now would be regarded as involving amounts too small to merit serious attention. Mr. BENTLEY, earnest, zealous and pertinacious, here made his mark and attracted attention. The Dutch descendants, who predominated in Bergen county, soon became acquainted with Mr. BENTLEY.

That people were slow and cautious in giving their confidence, but when once given, it was without limit. Mr. BENTLEY in that way acquired the confidence of the descendants of the Hollanders, and retained it without diminution until the time of his death.

Squire Paradise, as he was called, a peculiar and eccentric man, who had a personal deformity from a curvature of the spine near the neck, held his Court as a Justice of the Peace in York street, at Powles Hook, and Mr. BENTLEY, from his efficiency and zeal, while yet a law student, became the attorney general in that tribunal. His native sagacity and practical sense, supplied the want of erudition; and confidence, the parent of success, was here acquired. Imprisonment for debt was not abolished in New Jersey until the legislative session of 1841 and 1842, and many were the struggles among young practitioners arising out of that, now considered, harsh and inhuman system. The controversy commenced with the arrest of

the victim, and very frequently ended with the insolvent's discharge at Hackensack, the county village, where in an old-fashioned Court House, sat a row of Judges of the Court of Common Pleas, more formidable in numbers than a modern inquest; for at that time, the Constitution of the State had not fixed the limit of their appointment, and the ambition of a country neighborhood, sought the distinction of a position on the bench, where men unfamiliar with the law could participate in the proceedings of the Common Pleas and Quarter Sessions.

On one of such occasions, Mr. BENTLEY had an amusing experience, which illustrates the effect on the mind of the bodily condition of the client. A merchant in New York had caused the arrest of a man, whom he regarded as a swindler. An insolvent bond was given. At the day assigned the merchant, with Mr. BENTLEY as his attorney, took the stage for Hackensack. The delinquent was placed under examination before the formidable array of County Judges, and Mr. BENTLEY followed him closely through, what the client regarded, as the devious ways of the debtor. The Court adjourned at twelve o'clock to the tavern on the green, where all the parties partook of roast pig and apple jack, which were the standard luxuries of those times. Such was the mollifying effect on the client of the dinner and the apple jack, (his appetite having been quickened by the stage coach ride), that after dinner, he turned round to his attorney, and said, damn it, let the poor devil go;

permitted him to be discharged as an insolvent, paid the fees for the prosecution, and returned home as if he had done a work of benevolence.

In 1833 he was Clerk of the Board of Select Men of Jersey City, that being the early title of the Municipal Corporation.

MR. BENTLEY was admitted to the Bar of New Jersey in the May Term of the Supreme Court, 1834, and took the degree of counsellor in September Term, 1839.

He at once showed his sagacity. The Powles Hook ferry was then at the foot of Grand street. On that street stood Billy Anderson's tavern, the proprietor of which was famous in those days for his humor and drollery, and along it passed all the travel to New York, where it came from the county of Essex and Middlesex and a large part of the county of Bergen. On this street, in the first square from the ferry, he purchased a lot, summoned to his assistance every practical aid, and there erected a neat and commodious office. Montgomery street now the great thoroughfare, was then only known by the classical name of Stinkweed street.

This was an early triumph. The success of the young general in his first battle-field; of the man of eloquence when he first holds his audience in close attention, have not awakened much more enthusiastic emotions than were felt by MR. BENTLEY, when he stepped into that office, as its master, with its appropriate furniture, and a few law books to garnish the shelves. This was a pledge of

stability. Clients came in. Matters of importance were entrusted to him, and he was early impressed with the opinion, which he entertained through life, that investments in land were the most safe, and that such estates in time of peril, would have more defenders, than any other kind of property. In those days, the modern art of confiscation by taxes and assessments, by which the few live lavishly out of the industry of the enterprizing, had not been cultivated.

Mr. BENTLEY acquired and held the confidence of the descendants of the Hollanders; invested their money on bond and mortgage; managed and settled the estates when the ownership was changed by death, and money flowed into his hands from the simple reason, that he evinced that he could be trusted, and could show sagacity in its use. The vast enterprizes, in which, in recent years, a few men have annually wielded capital, larger in amount than in former times, were the revenues of the government were, not then in existence; but the skillful manager in those earlier times, evinced probably as much ability, as has been shown by the genius of modern financiers; as Sir Francis Drake, who carried the standard of Queen Elizabeth in triumph on the ocean in feeble ships, could be regarded as a bolder and more skillful navigator than the most able sailor of modern times.

Mr. BENTLEY had an element of success which marks all able men. What he could not do himself, he could

find the right man to do, and he always in his cases showed his judgment by selecting the best assistants.

He was essentially a manager of affairs.

He was sagacious, skillful and persevering; and in this sort of management, he evinced sagacity and sound judgment, to gain his object, without defrauding his adversary.

He came early in contact with the leading men in the profession, by calling in their assistance in the large affairs in which he was engaged, and his practical judgment and acumen, were always most valuable aids in any controversy.

He became the Attorney of the Select Men of Jersey City, and was engaged in the celebrated cause of The Select Men against Dummer, in which in 1842, the doctrine of dedication by maps was decided.

In 1843 he was elected Mayor of Jersey City. Such a selection at that period was not so much a matter of party success, as an expression of confidence and good will among neighbors.

Though not a politician in the sense of seeking office, he was at all times positive in his political convictions, and zealous in performing his duties towards the party to which he adhered, and exerted a large influence in public affairs.

In earlier life he was an earnest supporter of the Democratic Party; but when the question of the extension of slavery into territories formerly free began to excite the

public attention, he became earnest in favor of freedom, and continued one of the staunchest defenders of the Union until the time of his death.

In his temperament he was earnest and zealous; and this quality imparted force and energy to his character.

He had one quality in a rare degree. He stuck to his friends. He would turn out of his way to render assistance to those who, when he was struggling to rise, aided him; and the children of his benefactors, unaware of the motives which impelled him, were frequently helped in the time of need. Gratitude has always been one of the characteristics of an elevated mind.

Though not a polished scholar, he was well informed. Eminently social and hospitable; his conversation was instructive, from the resources of an active and observing mind.

In the management of a litigation, frequently as much skill, energy and courage are exhibited, as in the conduct of a campaign, by an experienced general.

In 1843 a serious controversy commenced in relation to the title to fifty-three acres of land, most of which was under water, lying in the cove on the western side of Hudson's river, between Jersey City and Hoboken. In 1803, the Proprietors of East Jersey, who at that time claimed a title to the lands under tide waters in New Jersey, made a survey of about fifty-three acres to Mr. Boudinot. Mr. Boudinot conveyed this supposed title to Nathaniel Budd, the father of Mrs. Bell. Mr. Budd

in 1836, obtained a grant of these lands under water, from the Legislature of New Jersey. John B. Coles, a man of sagacity and energy, owned a large tract of land which bounded on this cove. Feeling no apprehension about the title conveyed by the Proprietors of East Jersey, he filled in some of the lands under water covered by the survey, and constructed a pier which projected into the river, near where the Erie Railway ferry now terminates. Coles seemed not to have been alarmed by the grant made by the State, which covered his pier, and some portion of the lands which were reclaimed. The belief was almost universal, at an early period of the history of New Jersey, that the owner of the bank of the river on tide waters, could reclaim the lands under water and raise them up from the flow of the tide, and project piers therefrom. Mrs. Bell had acquired the title of her father, Nathaniel Budd, and cut grass from that portion of the lands which were covered by these grants, and which had been reclaimed by Mr. Coles. Gough, a tenant of the descendants of Mr. Coles, brought an action of trespass against Mrs. Bell, before a justice of the peace. Mrs. Bell's situation was known to Mr. BENTLEY, and at that time, single handed, he undertook the defence of her case. He brought to his aid eminent counsel, and the controversey went through the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals; and it was finally determined in the Court of Appeals, that according to the ancient usage and local common law of New Jersey, the

lands which were reclaimed from the bed of the river by the riparian owner, were his property, notwithstanding the subsequent grant made by the State.

The cause excited great interest, and the general impression throughout the State was, that such Legislative grants were of no avail as against the rights of the shore owners, as they were usually termed. The decision of the Court of Appeals concluded only the question as to the title of the shore owners to the lands by them raised above the flow of the tide. The residue of the tract flowed by the waters, still remained in dispute. Mr. BENTLEY unwearied by disaster, still persevered. Mrs. Bell who had become a citizen of New York, commenced an action of ejectment in the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of New Jersey, against the Coles, which was tried before Judge Grier, and resulted in a verdict for the plaintiff, as to the lands under water covered by the grant, which were not reclaimed. This result ended in a compromise with the Messrs. Coles, and they conveyed to Mrs. Bell three feet of the land on the margin of the river along high water mark, and thus the title of the upland, and the land under water, became united in one party.

Mr. BENTLEY had the confidence of capitalists, and an association was formed in whom this title was vested. It became evident that the Erie Railway must have its main terminus in New Jersey on the North River, opposite to New York, and that Piermont must be abandoned. To



accomplish this object, the New York and Erie Railroad became the purchaser of a portion of this property. The share of Mrs. Bell was protected by Mr. BENTLEY, and she became a person in affluent circumstances. The New Jersey Railroad and the Camden and Amboy Railroad having become united, and appreciating the vast importance of terminal facilities on the bank of the Hudson, became the purchasers of the remainder of this property.

This question was agitated in so serious a form, that it became the subject of the most earnest legislative controversies. The shore owners were arrayed on the one hand, and those who insisted that the State should derive some benefit from these valuable lands under water, became their adversaries. The result has been, that the Court of Appeals of the State decided that the Legislature could grant lands under water, in front of lands owned on the bank of the river, to others than shore owners.

All great questions generally end in some compromise, and a Riparian Commission has been created, with authority to make grants or leases of lands under water for a valuable consideration, to the owners of the banks of the rivers, who can acquire such titles in preference to strangers.

Banking facilities were rare in Jersey City. The old North River Bank in Greenwich street was generally the resort of Jersey men on the west banks of the Hudson. The banking enterprises in Bergen county had generally been disastrous. The Hudson County Bank was founded

in the year 1851, and Mr. BENTLEY conceiving the need of another institution, and having the confidence of capitalists, organized the Mechanics and Traders Bank in the year 1853, and became its President.

He evinced in that position his usual ability, and though he retired from that office on account of the conduct of others, who did not fully appreciate the delicacy of their position, the institution prospered under his management and won the confidence of the public.

He became a prominent trustee in the Provident Institution for Savings in Jersey City, and was its legal adviser to the time of his death.

His general impression was to invest in land, and instead of trusting to investments in corporations, his maxim was, that he could best manage his own capital.

In the purchase of lands, his preference was to acquire those on which there was some improvements, that interest and taxes might not absorb the value of the investment ; a rule, the soundness of which has been demonstrated by the disasters of recent times.

While in the pursuit of business he had a maxim, which with him was successful in practice ; that to get in debt for that which was fully equivalent to the responsibility incurred, stimulated to exertion, and led to success.

On the 13th October, 1842, he married Miss Margaret E. Holmes of Jersey City, who was of English descent. His married life was harmonious, and he derived from that source an incentive to activity and progress. The strength

and confidence which a man of well constituted mind derives from happy domestic relations, lead to great exertions ; and the conviction that disaster will wreck more than one, introduces the elements of prudence and caution.

In the year 1854, he made a purchase of lands on the western slope of Bergen Hill. He induced Mr. Harrison, a successful merchant of the City of New York, who married a sister of Mrs. BENTLEY, and who had resided in Jersey City, to join with him in the ownership of the property. Mr. BENTLEY erected a commodious residence on this property, and Mr. Harrison soon after built for himself a home within a convenient distance.

This was his home for the remainder of his life ; and some relative, some friend or neighbor, could daily be found under his hospitable roof. His wife, a lady of cultivated manners and kindly disposition, contributed her share to the entertainments. He had two children, a son and a daughter, and he lived to see his grandchildren grow up around him. He thus enjoyed that paternal pride, which in imagination looks forward to future generations to perpetuate a name, and to whom he could transmit the fruits of his labors. He lived to see his son engage in the same profession ; who, though sustained by a competency, the result of paternal labors, has evinced an honorable pride to achieve success, by industry and learning. In our American life it is too often the case, that the wealth of the parent, is destructive of honorable emulation among the sons.

Opposed to municipal extravagance, Mr. BENTLEY took an active part in all those plans designed to protect property from unnecessary taxes and wasteful assessments.

Finding that extravagant and unjust assessments had been imposed on property in Jersey City, which provoked serious litigation, the result of which, if successful, would have thrown great burthens on the public at large, where they did not properly belong. In 1873, he conceived the plan of creating a commission, to be composed of men of high character, who should be empowered to review all such cases, and adjust them on sound and equitable principles. With his usual energy, he went at this important subject; he carried his project before the Legislature; had a commission appointed, of which Judge Haines, who had been the Governor of the State, and Justice of the Supreme Court, was made the head; and the result was a more just and proper distribution of the public burthens; and the assessments having been fairly established, have been for the most part collected.

Instead of shrinking from responsibility, he was ever ready to oppose projects designed to oppress the property holder, and on many occasions, he evinced how much success could be obtained by earnest and persevering effort.

In times of national peril, growing out of the civil war, he earnestly upheld, on all occasions, the credit and power of the government.

When his health declined, he ceased his professional labors, and the active pursuits of business. He then fre-

quently expressed the idea, that the happiest period of his life was, when he had difficulties to overcome, and strength and energy to overcome them ; thus evincing that the pleasure of life consists in the exercise of one's faculties, in honorable and congenial pursuits.

He was treasurer of the Jersey City and Bergen Plank Road Company, a director in the Gas Company, and at one time, treasurer, and executed many trusts relative to property, where individuals were concerned.

He was also vice-president of the Savings Bank of Jersey City.

Towards the close of his life, he spent much time in travel. He visited Europe and the Pacific Coast, and wherever he went, made friends by his genial disposition.

Among his intimate friends was Doctor Cornelison. The doctor had been cheered by Mr. BENTLEY in times of disaster, and as they both grew old, they were frequently together.

A few of his intimate associates survive, and they can bear testimony to the genuineness of his friendship ; which is no small matter, as we learn by experience, that many men of prominence, and who have won some distinction, are not capable by nature of manifesting that exalted quality.

## O B I T U A R Y .

## The Death of Peter Bentley, Esq.

The Board of Trustees of the Provident Institution for Savings in Jersey City having been called together to place on the minutes a record of the death of PETER BENTLEY, who for thirty years, and ever since the organization of this Institution, has been one of the trustees, and for the past fourteen years one of the Vice-Presidents, and an active and efficient member; who departed this life on Sunday, the 26th instant :

*Resolved*, That in mourning the death of PETER BENTLEY, the Board not only express their own feelings of sorrow, but also those of a number of other members of the Institution, who, as depositors, have had for many years kindly intercourse with the deceased.

*Resolved*, That the Board has lost a wise counselor and steadfast officer, the public a good citizen, and the depositors a warm friend who was ever solicitous for their welfare.

*Resolved*, That the Trustees, to testify their regard for their deceased colleague, will attend his funeral in a body this day at half-past three o'clock.

A true copy from the minutes.

E. W. KINGSLAND,

*Secretary.*

At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Jersey City Gas Light Company, held Tuesday, September 28th, the following resolutions were adopted :

WHEREAS, It has pleased our Heavenly Father to take from among us our friend, PETER BENTLEY, one who has for so long a time been identified with us as Director in this company, and a time-honored citizen closely interested in the growth and prosperity of Jersey City ; therefore

*Resolved*, That while we sorrow for our loss, realizing that we can no longer call upon him for his advice and shall miss him in our councils, yet we would humbly submit to the will of "Him who doeth all things well."

*Resolved*, That in the death of PETER BENTLEY our city loses an old citizen, one who was ever active when her welfare was concerned, ever fearless to face and oppose that which he thought to be wrong, and ever ready to insist upon and urge forward the right.

*Resolved*, That we deeply sympathize with his bereaved family in their affliction, and would sincerely commend them to a higher sympathy than ours.

*Resolved*, That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the family of the deceased.

D. SMITH, *Secretary.*













JUL 10 1942

